



Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance
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Below are comments that Alliance Executive Director Trevor Stevenson presented at the June 29, 2011, Comprehensive Plan hearing by the Teton Board of County Commissioners and Jackson Town Council.

Honorable public officials and residents of Jackson Hole:

I'm Trevor Stevenson, Executive Director of the Jackson Hole Conservation Alliance, speaking on behalf of the organization and our members.

A few weeks ago the Alliance submitted technical analyses and recommendations for your consideration. I would like to commend the planning staff for taking those recommendations into account to the extent that they could, and making many improvements to the latest draft of the plan. However, resolving some of the most substantive recommendations requires leadership from you, our elected officials.

I know that you want to be done with the policies section of the Comp Plan, and you don't want to make any additional changes. Tonight I'm asking you to make a few very specific, simple, easily-achievable improvements that are in line with your objectives.

We've distributed the specific text improvements to you tonight [see Page 3], and I'd like to just speak to why each of these changes is so important.

As the Alliance explained at the last meeting, it is essential that you commit to the development of a multi-year action plan prior to final adoption of the Comp Plan and maps. This additional research will better inform many of the key policies in the plan currently slated for exploration. The Alliance has provided you with a simple Action Plan format recently used in Aspen, and we would be happy to play a supporting role in the development of a good Action Plan.

Growth Management is central to the success of the Comp Plan, and Richman's analysis highlights several major concerns with missing aspects of our current plan. It would be wise to consider his advice and commit to further exploring this issue in the next few months, perhaps with a task force and/or a consultant.

Permanent conservation of open spaces and critical wildlife habitat is clearly a goal we all share, but it needs to be stated more clearly in the Comp Plan. Adding one sentence should help resolve that issue.

Finding a way to reduce development in rural areas in exchange for increased density in town and elsewhere is arguably the primary objective of the Comp Plan. I know you're planning to look into this further, but please include a sentence in the plan formally committing to explore the best approach to permanently eliminating development rights in areas targeted for protection. A task force should be created as soon as possible to investigate this and reach a decision on the best way to achieve this goal, because it would be counterproductive to try to address this after the mapping phase is complete.

As you complete the additional research into each of the important topics that will be in your Action Plan, you will obviously need to make adjustments to the Comp Plan based on the results of the research. Your final motion for approval tonight currently contains language that states that no additional changes will be made to the policies, and you need to clarify that you do expect some changes to the policies that you will still be exploring. Otherwise any additional research would be pointless, and the plan would remain

incomplete. The mapping phase may also reveal weaknesses in the plan's policies, and you should leave yourself flexibility to make improvements if it seems they are needed.

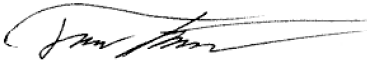
When you respond to public comment tonight, please discuss and vote on each of the specific changes we have suggested, referring to the text recommendations in the handout we have given you. [See Page 3.]

Finally, I want to talk briefly about public participation. I know that the Comp Plan process began years ago with a huge amount of public participation, but in recent months there has been far too little public involvement. Partly people are burned out on the issue, but the high-speed process this year has also made it very difficult for citizens to participate.

As you design the process for the character district mapping, please redouble your efforts to create a system that is both inclusive and effective. The Alliance will provide suggestions for how to best achieve this, and we will assist you in encouraging the public to participate.

Thank you for your efforts to develop policies that will achieve the community's vision, and we trust that you will give due consideration to our proposals.

We look forward to working closely with you to develop an Action Plan and involve the community in the Character District Mapping.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Trevor Stevenson", with a long, sweeping horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Trevor Stevenson
Executive Director

June 29, 2011

To: Teton Board of County Commissioners, Mayor Barron and Jackson Town Council
CC: Jeff Daugherty, Tyler Sinclair, Alex Norton and Shawn Hill

Specific Recommended Actions for June 29th hearing, prior to approval of the Comprehensive Plan vision and policies

- 1. Action Plan:** Commit now to creating a multi-year Action Plan, prior to Plan adoption, that outlines a strategy to complete the studies identified in the Plan. Commit to beginning work on key issues immediately.
- 2. Growth Management:** Add a policy in the Growth Management section, where appropriate, with a commitment to “explore additional growth management techniques.”
- 3. Permanent Conservation:** Add language in the Ecosystem Stewardship or Growth Management sections, where appropriate, stating that “the permanent conservation of lands will be a primary land use strategy in the future.”
- 4. Land Use:** Add language in Policy 3.1.a committing to “explore ways to ensure that increases in development potential in complete neighborhoods are offset by permanent extinguishment of development potential in the rural county.”
- 5. Future changes to the policies prior to adoption:** Add language in your *final motion* stating that “as additional information becomes available the Plan’s policies will be adjusted to be in alignment with the new information.” Remove language that limits changes to the document to only legal review and updates and references to appendices.